



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

Yerevan Times

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Thanksgiving Day



A variant of the harvest festivals celebrated in many parts of the world, Thanksgiving is popularly traced to a 1621 feast shared by Pilgrims to the New World who had arrived in what is now the Northeastern U.S. in 1620. Arriving at Ply-

mouth Colony too late to grow many crops, and lacking fresh food, the Pilgrims suffered terribly during the winter of 1620-1621. Half the colony died from disease. The following spring, local Wampanoag Native Americans taught the colonists how to grow corn and other local crops, and also helped the newcomers master hunting and fishing. Because they harvested bountiful crops of corn, barley, beans and pumpkins, the Pilgrims had much to be thankful for in the fall of 1621. The colonists and their Wampanoag benefactors held a harvest feast to express gratitude for their blessings.

The legacy of giving thanks, particularly with a shared feast, has survived the centuries. Thanksgiving, presently celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, has been an annual tradition in the United States since President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 proclamation.

Christmas Day

Christmas, celebrated by most Christians on December 25, commemorates the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The modern, commercialized Christmas began to emerge in the 19th century with the new custom of purchasing gifts for young children. But the Christmas season is about far more than shopping.



For many Americans, it is a period of general goodwill and an occasion for charitable and volunteer work. Other Christmas traditions similarly began during the 19th century. Santa Claus — derived from the Dutch Sinter Klaas and the German Saint Nicholas — assumed the persona of a jolly dispenser of gifts and pilot of a reindeer-drawn sleigh. Christmas trees became popular in Britain and the United States in the 19th century. Today, many Americans purchase a fresh evergreen tree or a reusable aluminum and plastic model and decorate it with lights and ornaments. In some families, Christmas gifts appear under the tree on the morning of December 25.

As with so many aspects of U.S. cultural life, Christmas in the United States reflects the values of a free and diverse people.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/pubs-english/2005/November/20051108163712jmnmdairf0.3664057.html>

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2006/December/20061226154528abretnuh0.7518579.html>

Read more on U.S. holidays at: http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/holidays.html

Did you know... that Black Friday -- the day after Thanksgiving, which is widely touted as the biggest Christmas shopping day in America -- is actually not the biggest shopping day? In fact, the Saturday before Christmas has historically been the largest volume shopping day.

MONDAY MOVIES

As part of its movie series, an English language film is shown at the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center every third Monday of the month. A 30 minute English-language discussion follows each movie. Upcoming movies will be shown on November 16 and December 21 at 14:30pm.

Please contact: ircyerevan@usa.am if you plan to attend the movie series.

IRC Hosts Seventh Alumni Round Table

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center held its seventh Alumni Roundtable Program on October 15, 2009. Hovhannes Hovhannesian, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Theology at Yerevan State University and Tigran Tshorokhyan, a faculty member in the Department of International Relations were invited to meet with students from the Departments of Theology, Philosophy and Psychology of various universities to discuss religious diversity in the United States. Hovhannesian provided comments and a unique perspective, having studied religion in America through the Junior Faculty Development Program, a U.S. Government sponsored educational program for university faculty interested in curriculum development and higher education. Susan Bridenstine, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, addressed participants at the opening of the discussion. She mentioned that the United States was founded on the principles of democracy, individual rights, and personal freedoms. She noted that the U.S. was settled in part by religious dissenters from Europe, who traveled to the "New World" in search of religious freedom.

Hovhannesian's presentation touched on the richness and complexity of the American religious landscape. He noted that while most Americans identify themselves as "Christian," American Christianity is very diverse. He added that hundreds of different Christian denominations coexist, and no one person or group can rightly claim to represent all Christians. Moreover, religious diversity extends well beyond Christianity. He noted that the U.S. is home to large communities of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, etc. The speaker also stated that an "apparent discrepancy between high levels of religious identity and an overwhelmingly secular popular culture in the United States can be baffling to outsiders, especially for visitors from Armenia, a country where the population mostly identifies itself as Armenian Apostolic."

The question and answer period focused on the diversity of religion groups, proselytizing, and the role of the U.S. Government, if any, in religious life. Students also touched upon issues of "civic" religion, the impact of different religious groups on statehood, and the roots of Halloween. Both students and the speakers found the meeting very interesting and useful. Speakers also agreed to speak at the American Corners in Armenia.



Students focused on Hovhannes's presentation



APAO Susan Bridenstine addresses the participants



Information Resource Center

New Resources

Journal Subscription

American Libraries

Art in America

Atlantic Monthly

Business Week

Columbia Journalism Review

Congressional Digest

Current History: A Journal of Contemporary World Affairs

Down Beat: Jazz, Blues, and Beyond

Economist

Environmental Magazine

Education Digest

Forbes

Forbes Life

Foreign Affairs

Foreign Policy

Harvard Business Review

Highlights for Children

International Economy

Language Magazine: The Journal of Communication

National Geographic

New Yorker

Newsweek

Scientific American

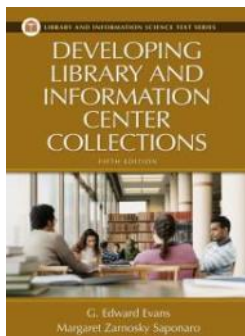
Smithsonian

Time

US News & World Report

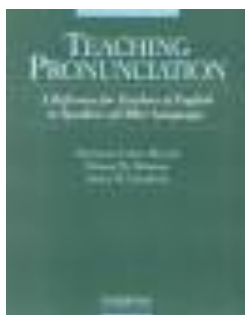
Wilson Quarterly

New Arrivals



Developing Library and Information Center Collections:

The latest edition continues to cover all phases of collection development--from needs assessment, policies, and the selection process (theory and practice) to publishers, serials, protection, legal issues, censorship and intellectual freedom. In addition electronic serials, introduced in the 4th edition, is combined with its print counterpart into a single chapter.



Teaching Pronunciation:

This course includes an overview of current theory and practice. The paperback edition offers current and prospective teachers of English a comprehensive treatment of pronunciation pedagogy, drawing on current theory and practice. The text provides an overview of teaching issues from the perspective of different methodologies and second language acquisition research. It has a thorough grounding in the sound system of North American English, and contains insights into how this sound system intersects with listening, morphology, and spelling.

What's New at The American Corners?

IN YEREVAN: PUBLIC LECTURE ON GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUES



Group picture with Yerevan AC patrons and co-coordinators

On October 17, 2009, the Yerevan American Corner hosted a public lecture entitled "Global H1N1 Influenza A Pandemic and Pandemic Vaccine Availability in Armenia." Guest speaker U.S. Embassy Health Unit Officer Michael Voorhies delivered a lecture about pandemic influenza and its impact.

Mr. Voorhies presented the history and location of flu viruses in the U.S. and provided some statistics. He discussed the Spanish flu, which took the lives of 50 million people worldwide. He also noted the importance of influenza prevention measures, mentioning the 1918 flu that caused 195,000 deaths in the U.S. In Philadelphia, where no prevention was organized (limiting public gatherings such as weddings, sport events etc.) 13,000 people died, whereas in St. Louis, where preventative measures were taken, only 2,000 people died as a result of the flu.

Mr. Voorhies spoke about Pandemic H1N1, which is a new virus. It is different from previous or current human seasonal influenza viruses. The virus is transmitted by inhaling infected droplets expelled by coughing or sneezing. To prevent spread, people should cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, stay home when they are unwell, clean their hands regularly, and avoid crowded areas where possible.

Among 53 participants, there were students from Yerevan State Medical University, Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Brusov and Haybusak University. The audience was very interactive and asked more than twenty questions. The students asked about treatment and available vaccines for the flu. Mr. Voorhies mentioned that while the vaccine exists in some countries, it is designed to prevent the disease and not to cure it. There were also many questions about types of flu, the way flu viruses spread, and if anyone has died from a flu vaccination.

The participants gained useful information about influenza and how to prevent it.

NATIVE AMERICANS FEATURED IN NOVEMBER FILM SERIES

The November Saturday Film Series will be devoted to films by and about "Native Americans" or the Indigenous People of the North American continent sometimes called, "Indians." The first Saturday of the series, November 7, the American Corner in Yerevan will present the award winning series "Dreamkeepers."

This film interweaves contemporary reservation life with stories from many different nations (tribes) and does so with Native American languages and actors. It has resonances for every stage of life, humor, drama, suspense, love, personal challenges and triumphs seen through the eyes of a young man and his grandfather.

The second Saturday, November 14, the American Corner will present a documentary on "Native American Healing." This film shows traditional elders and healers from a number of nations (tribes) who explain some of their ancient and contemporary healing modalities.

The final film screening will be held on November 28th. The film "Geronimo" starring Wes Studi, Gene Hackman, Robert Duvall and Matt Damon will be presented. The movie is a stunning performance about the fearless warrior Geronimo, who was one of the last Native American leaders to surrender in conflicts between the Apaches and the U.S. Government. This film also has actors speaking Apache and was filmed in Texas and Mexico where the Apache once lived.

All Films will begin at 1:00 pm and will have English subtitles.

IN KAPAN: THE U.S. CONGRESS

On September 25, 2009, the American Corner in Kapan organized a public lecture entitled "The United States Congress" presented by U.S. Embassy Political Officer Nigel Decoster. He spoke about the U.S. Congress and its structure, when it was built, how many branches it has, about its authority. He also answered questions of participants. English language teachers, students and frequent visitors of the Corner attended the lecture. This was the eighth in the "Americans at the American Corner" lecture series in Kapan. Participants learned a lot about the federal legislation bodies of the United States.



Exploring Countries and Cultures Online

Wikipedia.org

www.wikipedia.org

Wikipedia is a multilingual, Web-based, free-content encyclopedia project based mostly on anonymous contributions. Wikipedia's articles provide links to guide the user to related pages with additional information.

Wikipedia is written collaboratively by an international group of volunteers. Anyone can write and make changes to Wikipedia articles. Since its creation in 2001, Wikipedia has grown rapidly into one of the largest reference web sites, attracting around 65 million visitors monthly as of 2009. Every day, hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the world collectively make tens of thousands of edits and create thousands of new articles to augment the knowledge held by the Wikipedia encyclopedia.

Encyclopedia.com

www.encyclopedia.com

The premier online library and research Web site, Encyclopedia.com puts millions of articles from some of the world's most authoritative and highly respected publications at your fingertips.

A free online encyclopedia features premier titles like The Columbia Encyclopedia, Oxford's World Encyclopedia, and the Encyclopedia of World Biography.

The online dictionary collection is an invaluable research tool with exhaustive information.

Encyclopedia.com offers millions of free articles, pictures, facts, and biographies along with information about topics like the arts, science, sports, medicine, accounting, and management. Encyclopedia.com is an ideal online reference source for researchers, students, educators, and professionals alike.

Encarta.msn.com

www.encyclopedia.com

The Encarta encyclopedia is one part of the Encarta site (others include a dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, and multimedia center). The more than 42,000 articles in the encyclopedia are lengthy, contain lots of links to other articles, and, for countries, typically include sections on geography, plant and animal life, natural resources, climate, environmental issues, people, ethnic groups and languages, religion, education, economy, government, and history. Articles on countries and other major topics are usually free, but links for more specific articles usually require a subscription.

Source: *The Traveler's Web* by Randolph Hock

TEDDY BEAR DAY - NOVEMBER 14

The teddy bear is a stuffed toy bear. They are usually stuffed with soft cotton and have smooth and soft fur. Almost every child has one on their bed and loves to sleep with one next to them.

The name Teddy Bear comes from former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, whose nickname was "Teddy." Morris Michtom saw a drawing of Roosevelt and a bear cub and was inspired to create a new toy. He created a little stuffed bear cub and put it in his shop window with a sign that read "Teddy's bear,"

after sending the bear to Roosevelt and receiving permission to sell the bears. The toys were an immediate success and Michtom founded the Ideal Novelty and Toy Co., which still exists today.



EXPLORE THE UNITED STATES THE NATIONAL PARKS, "AMERICA'S BEST IDEA"

President Obama and his family recently visited the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone National Park. Writer and historian Wallace Stegner called the national parks in the United States "the best idea we ever had."



Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst." In 1872, Yellowstone National Park became the first national park in the world, its creation spawning a worldwide national parks movement.

"Over the course of more than 150 years, a once-radical idea has evolved into a cohesive national parks system, with a sometimes conflicting two part-

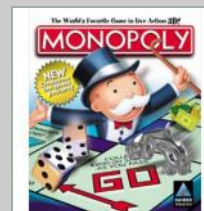
mission: to make the parks accessible to all and to preserve them for future generations." Check out the [timeline](#) charting the evolution of the park system.

(Source: [PBS](#))

"MONOPOLY"

Monopoly is a game of luck, chance and strategy with one object— to bankrupt your opponents. The game was patented by an unemployed salesman named Charles Darrow. In the middle of the Great Depression, the game was a

surprise hit for toy manufacturer Parker Brothers and became the best selling game of the year. Darrow got the monopoly on Monopoly and became the first millionaire board game designer. Darrow's game has sold more than 250 million copies in 37 languages.



NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The 20th anniversary of Native American Heritage Month

This November will mark the 20th anniversary of Native American Heritage Month as proclaimed by the President of the United States of America and enacted by the Congress of the United States through Public Law 101-343. It recognizes the significant contributions of the first Americans to the United States. Although the first "American Indian Day" was declared by the State of New York in 1916, a month long recognition of Native Americans was not achieved until 1990. In that year, President George Bush declared the first National American Indian Heritage Month in November.

Throughout history, American Indian and Alaskan Native peoples have been an integral part of the American character. Against the odds, America's first peoples have endured, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence. Tribal America has brought to this great country certain values and ideas that have become ingrained in the American spirit: the knowledge that humans can thrive and prosper without destroying the natural environment; the understanding that people from very different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and traditions can come together to build a great country; and the awareness that diversity can be a source of strength rather than division.

Did you know?

- Native Americans are routinely celebrated for their participation in the settlers' first Thanksgiving, however, there are countless other contributions that

Native people have made to the development of this country. There's chocolate, vanilla, and even many of the ideals put forth in the Constitution.

- The Navajo Constitute is one of the largest American Indian tribes with 171,000 people, and their principal reservation is the largest in America. Monument Valley lies within their reservation and is an icon of the American West.
- Native American's knowledge of plants and herbs contributed to the development of more than 20% of medicines in use today.



Recommended websites for additional reading

November is Native American Heritage Month - The Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/topics/nativeamericans/index.html>

American Indian Heritage Month <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/nativeamerican01/inner.html>

National American Indian Heritage Month - National Register of Historical Places <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/feature/indian/>

Native American Sites <http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/indians.html>

National Museum of the American Indian - Smithsonian Institution <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>

Native American Authors - Internet Public library <http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/>

November 30, 1835 - Mark Twain's birthday



Mark Twain is on nearly everyone's list of all-time great American authors. Twain was raised in Hannibal, Missouri and as a young man held a series of jobs which included work as a printer's apprentice, a Mississippi riverboat pilot, and a newspaperman in Nevada and San Francisco. He moved gradually from journalism to travel writing and then to fiction, aided by the success of his 1869 travel memoir *The Innocents Abroad*. His humorous tales of human nature, especially *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1885), remain standard texts in high school and college literature classes. In his own day, Twain was a tremendously popular figure and a celebrated public speaker who toured widely. Other Twain classics include *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) and the short story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (1867).

Who2.com

Did you know?

- Mark Twain, the genius writer who is now recognized as the "father of American literature," was not educated beyond elementary school.

- His pseudonym, Mark Twain, was taken from Mississippi riverboat terminology; it's a measure of depth.

- Mark Twain was not simply a typesetter, printer, river boat pilot, gold miner, humorist, author, etc., but was also a talented actor.

Web Sites with Information about Mark Twain

Mark Twain in His Times <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/>

Mark Twain - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain

The Official Web Site of Mark Twain <http://www.cmgww.com/historic/twain/>

Mark Twain Project <http://www.marktwainproject.org/>

Mark Twain Quotes http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Mark_Twain/



What is a phobia?

Phobia is a word which derives from the ancient Greek 'phobos' meaning 'fear'. Fear is a natural feeling and is part of human nature. Indeed, it can be useful on occasions: it is part of the 'fight or flight' response that has helped us to make snap decisions in perilous situations throughout our development as a species.

Nevertheless, fear is only a useful tool in some situations. In others it can become a crippling emotion. Intense, irrational fears about specific things or activities (which are, in themselves, not dangerous) can take over a person's life. These fears are called 'anxiety disorders' and the sufferer will go to enormous lengths to avoid the thing he/she fears.

EJOURNAL USA: "CLIMATE CHANGE PERSPECTIVES"



Presenting perspectives from key countries affected by climate change, the September 2009 edition of eJournal USA, "Climate Change Perspectives," explores how governments, international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, communities, and individuals working together might effectively mitigate and adapt to its impacts.

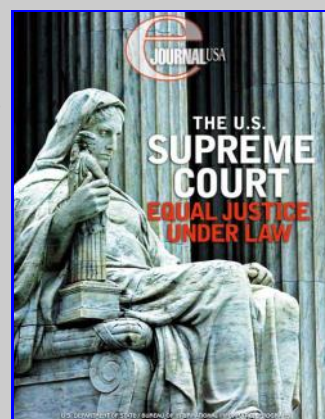
PDF and Internet versions are currently available in English on www.america.gov, the IIP Web site. Selected articles will also be available for comment and discussion on the eJournal USA Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ejournalUSA>.

"We have reached a pivotal moment in the climate challenge, and what we decide to do now will have a profound and lasting impact on our nation and our planet," writes U.S. special envoy for climate change Todd Stern in his introductory article.

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0909.html>

EJOURNAL USA: "THE U.S. SUPREME COURT: EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW"

As an institution, the Supreme Court commands respect, legitimacy, and prestige both in the United States and abroad. The October 2009 edition of eJournal USA describes many aspects of the U.S. Supreme Court. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Solicitor General Elena Kagan present their introductions, and contributions by legal scholars and journalists focus on the elements of judicial decision making and independence of the justices. Four Court officials and a former Supreme Court law clerk also describe their jobs.



The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/1009.html>

The journals will be available in several other languages in the coming weeks. A listing of other issues of eJournal USA is available at <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>.

The printed copy of the e-journal is available in the Information Resource Center and American Corners in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor.

In upcoming months, the International Information Programs' Publications Office will be producing the following issues of eJournal USA:

November	<i>The Roots of Innovation</i>
December	<i>Development and Governance</i>
January	<i>After Elections: Bridging Differences</i>
February	<i>A World Free of Nuclear Arms</i>
March	<i>Global Trends in Agriculture</i>
April	<i>Climate Change Partnerships</i>

National Gaming Day 2009 is right around the corner, November 14, 2009

"Hundreds of libraries across the country are preparing to celebrate the American Library Association's (ALA) second annual National Gaming Day @ your library on Saturday, November 14, 2009. ALA invites libraries of all types to join in the celebration and take advantage of the many free publicity tools the ALA offers."

Read more at: <http://gaming.ala.org/ngd/>

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 13:00 to 18:00.

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